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# NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS



IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

**THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.**—The *New York Medical Journal* says: The special committee on the prevention of blindness of the New York Association for the Blind held its first annual meeting recently, and submitted a most gratifying report of its first year's work. This committee, which is made up of physicians and laymen, has for its object the investigation of the direct causes of preventable blindness, with the hope of eliminating such causes, and as *ophthalmia neonatorum* is responsible for about one-third of all blind children in schools for the blind in this country, the committee hopes, through legislative and educational measures, to practically eradicate this disease. It was recommended that a solution of silver nitrate be gratuitously distributed by the State Department of Health to physicians and midwives, and to this end an appropriation of \$5000 was made by the state. All birth certificates issued by the State Department of Health now bear the query: "What preventive of *ophthalmia neonatorum* did you use? If none, state the reason therefor." The educational work of the committee has been carried on by means of publications, public speaking, lantern slides, and photograph exhibits. The expense of the work is borne by the Russell Sage Foundation. The membership of the committee includes Dr. Eugene H. Porter, Dr. Charles Stedman Bull, Dr. J. Clifton Edgar, Dr. Ward A. Holden, Dr. F. Park Lewis.

**SYMPOSIUM ON ALCOHOL.**—The *Yale Medical Journal* reports a symposium on alcohol held at the meeting of the Connecticut State Medical Society and the Fairchild Medical Association, at which papers were read on "Alcohol as a Food," "Alcohol as a Poison," and "Alcohol as a Remedy." In discussing these papers, Dr. Carmalt presented statistics from the reports of the New Haven Hospital from 1881 to 1908, showing that there has been a steady decline in the use of alcohol and a corresponding increase in the use of milk. He believes that the profession is using less and less alcohol all the time, and that milk is being used more for nourishment.

**THE INFLUENCE OF DIET ON INFANT MORTALITY.**—J. P. Crozier

Griffith's paper in the *New York Medical Journal* is a plea for a more careful preparation of the infant's food. He considers that the ferments, alexins, antibodies, and other substances are in many respects different from those in cow's milk. It is possibly through their influence that an infant can be made to thrive if only it is given daily one or two feedings from the breast. Something imbibed in this way appears to make the cow's milk more readily absorbable by the digestive tract. Many of the maternal excuses for early weaning are purely fanciful, and no woman should wean her child except under the physician's direction. Especial care should be taken to prevent in bad weather the decomposition of food which has been properly prepared. Clean milk, free from dirt, is the first necessity. In regard to Pasteurization and sterilization of milk the author says that prolonged heating at a high temperature destroys many of the natural ferments and likewise alters the digestibility of the proteins by its action on the lime salts. Many of the ferments and other bodies are not affected by Pasteurization at proper temperature. From a purely clinical standpoint there is no doubt that milk of poor quality is much more harmful raw than sterilized. He himself has little fear of the bad results attributed to heating as compared with the danger of milk rich in bacteria, and believes that with all doubtful milk, and probably with all milk during the hottest weather, Pasteurization is to be recommended. The sale of commercially sterilized and Pasteurized milk is to be condemned. It has been shown that Pasteurized milk will develop dangerous bacteria more rapidly than will raw milk, the heat having destroyed the lactic acid germs, which, if left alive, check by their growth the development of the proteolytic varieties. Pasteurized milk is, then, valuable, but the necessity of care in its production and especially the care of the product afterward is evident. The term "sterilized milk" and "Pasteurized milk" on the milk wagon merely gives the mother a false sense of security, even supposing that the process has been honestly and properly carried out by the dealer. All sterilization and Pasteurization should be done at home.

**THE PUBLIC DRINKING CUP.**—A new periodical, *The Cup Campaigner*, has made its début with the December number. The journal introduces itself as "A militant little paper published at intervals by persons striving to banish that most prolific medium for spreading disease—the public drinking cup; containing authentic reports of the rulings of health officials, the growth of public sentiment through the press, and other developments of the crusade." The editorial offices are at 115 Broadway, and the editor is Mr. Hugh Moore.

OXYGEN IN SERIOUS CASES OF WHOOPING-COUGH.—The *Medical Record* says: E. Weill and G. Mouriquand describe their experience with the use of oxygen by inhalation in serious cases of whooping-cough and in pneumonia following this disease. It will serve to prevent the occurrence of pneumonia in many cases that are threatened with lung involvement. It also diminishes the severity of the paroxysms of cough, although it does not seem to lessen their number. Their cases amount to thirty and in all of them oxygen seemed to act as a sedative of the first order. It acts not as a depressant of the system, but enables it to struggle against the disease. Cyanosis is lessened, appetite is better, and somnolence diminished between the attacks. It acts as an antiseptic in the lungs, and prevents the extension of pneumonia to new localizations.

#### CURRENT LITERATURE OF INTEREST TO NURSES

*New York Medical Journal*, December 4, "The Influence of Diet on Infantile Mortality," J. P. Crozier Griffith, M.D.; December 11, "Disguised Starvation and the Reasoning Faculties," Nathan Rosewater; December 25, "The Report of Some Interesting Cases of Foreign Bodies Removed from the Ear," Hal Foster, M.D. *Medical Record*, December 4, "Women in Medicine," Editorial; December 18, "Stammering," G. Hudson-Makuen; December 25, "Borderland Cases of Insanity," Editorial. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, November 27, "Value and Limitations of Salt-free Diet and Restriction of Fluids in Nephritis," Victor C. Vaughan, M.D.; "Constipation," December 25, "The Deaf Child and the Physician," John Dutten Wright, "A Cap for Outdoor Sleeping," Thompson Frazer, M.D., "Treatment for Chronic Constipation," George Edward Barnes, M.D., "American Standards in Education," Editorial; January 1, "Work Cure," Herbert J. Hall, M.D., "The Defence of Medical Research," Editorial; January 8, "The Rôle of Animal Experimentation in Diagnosis of Disease," M. J. Rosenau, M.D., "Germophobia," Editorial. *The Survey*, January 8, "State Care of the Insane," William L. Russell, M.D.; January 1, "The Construction Camps of the People," by Lilian D. Wald and Frances A. Kellor, a study of housing and sanitary conditions of the laborers employed on the new barge canal and on the water-works system, showing how far superior is the care given by the city to that of the state, which makes no provision for maintaining the health of its laborers and by disregard of hygienic precautions permits these camps to become menaces not only to the health of the employees but also to the communities in which they are situated.